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CARLO BARBERI
SPAWN

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SPAWN

SPAWN'S UNIVERSE 92 21

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PREVIOUSLY IN *SPAWN*

While on the hunt for another secret file pertaining to the "Shadow Players", Spawn makes a horrifying discovery in the basement of one of their former associates. This fight is going to be personal!

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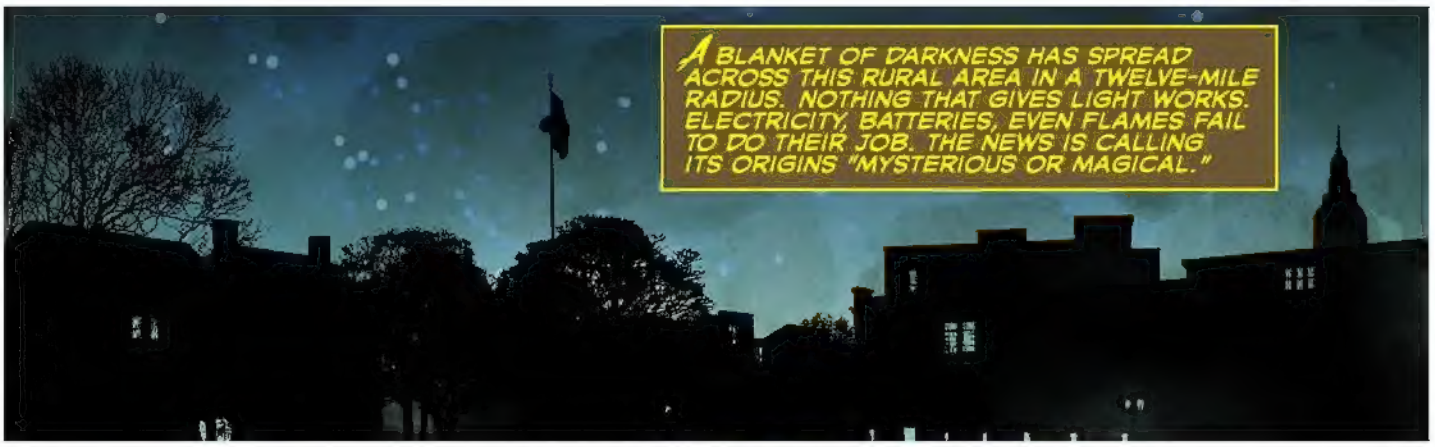

A BLANKET OF DARKNESS HAS SPREAD ACROSS THIS RURAL AREA IN A TWELVE-MILE RADIUS. NOTHING THAT GIVES LIGHT WORKS. ELECTRICITY, BATTERIES, EVEN FLAMES FAIL TO DO THEIR JOB. THE NEWS IS CALLING ITS ORIGINS "MYSTERIOUS OR MAGICAL."

THEY'RE WRONG, IT'S FROM THE PITS OF HELL.

ONE OF ITS CHOSEN PUPPETS, IS ENRAGED, AND THAT EMOTION, UNWITTINGLY, HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO POWER!

AS HE STANDS OVER THE IMPRISONED YOUNG WOMAN AND HER BABY, HE CANNOT FIND THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE WHAT HE'S THINKING.

WHAT'D YOU DO TO MY DOGS?!

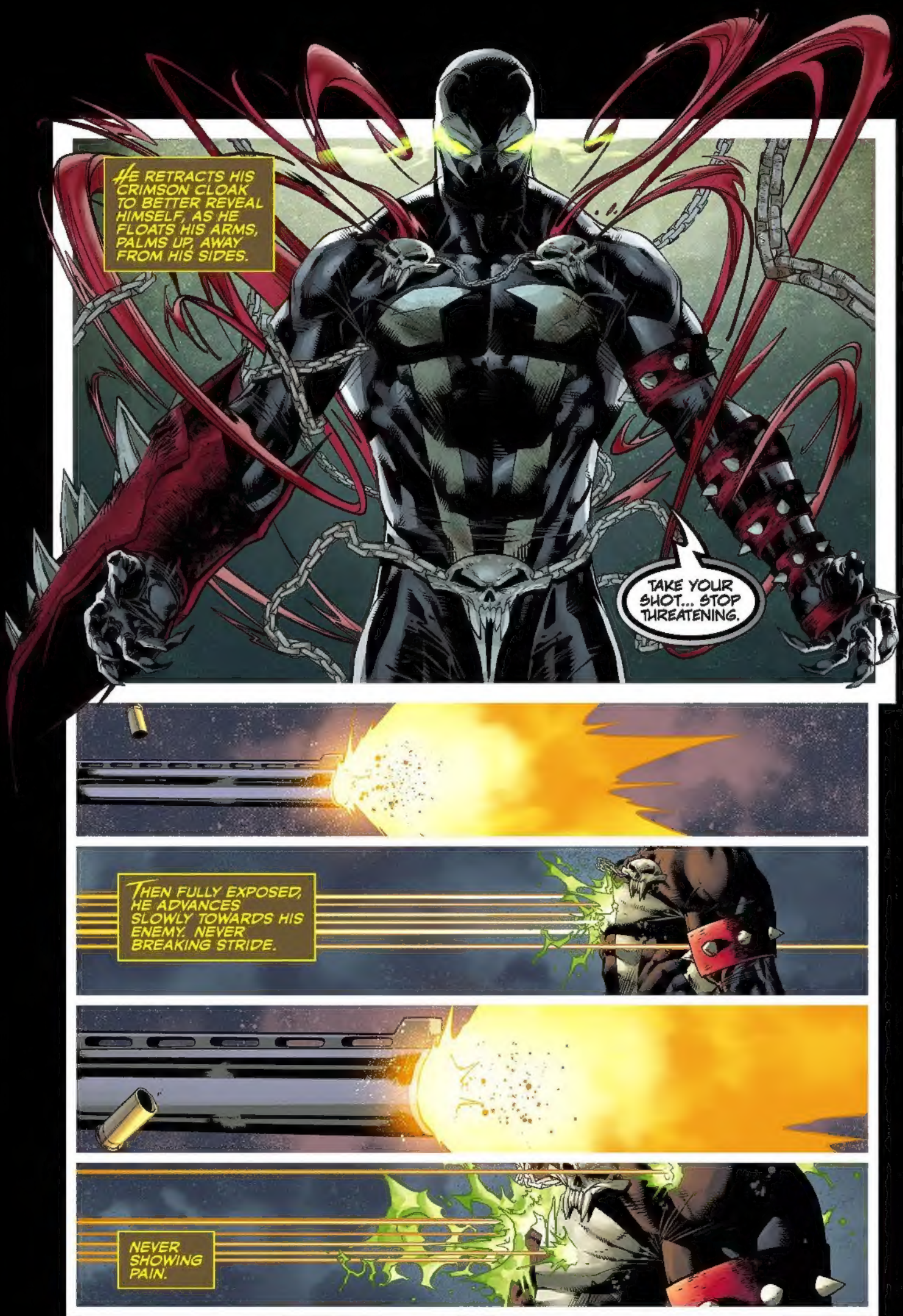
THEY AREN'T LISTENING TO ME. *WHY?* BECAUSE OF THAT GODDAMN GIRL? WE'RE FROM HELL, WE TAKE WHAT WE WANT, *DON'T* START GOING SOFT ON ME!

ONLY ANIMAL SOUNDS RESONATE FROM SPAWN.

SHE'S OURS, SPAWN, YOU GET THAT? SHE'LL SERVE OUR PLEASURES, DO WHATEVER WE TELL HER TO DO... AND IN ANY POSITION.

LIKE A LION ATTACKING ITS PREY, SPAWN LUNGES AT HIS ENEMY WITH A SPEED HE'S RARELY SHOWN, ENSNARING HIS ENEMY BEFORE IT HAS A CHANCE TO BLINK.

SPAWN HITS HIM HARD ENOUGH TO CRUSH CARTILAGE AND CRACK BONE AROUND THE NOSE AND EYE SOCKETS. ANOTHER FIST CRACKS THREE RIBS.
THOOK
BUT THIS IS TOO EASY. TOO UNSATISFYING. SO, SPAWN LETS HIS PREY GO.
KNOWING THE WEAK WILL ALWAYS MAKE ONE...LAST...FEEBLE ATTEMPT TO SURVIVE.
AS HE TAKES AIM, WHAT STRIKES THIS VAMPIRE IN HUMAN FORM THE MOST, IS THAT SPAWN HAS SUDDENLY BECOME CALM. ALMOST PEACEFUL IN HIS BREATHING.
EVEN WHEN FACED WITH THE PROSPECT OF SEVERE PAIN.
YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF SHELLS I HAVE IN HERE, RIGHT?
THE KIND THAT'LL KILL YOU!


HE RETRACTS HIS CRIMSON CLOAK TO BETTER REVEAL HIMSELF, AS HE FLOATS HIS ARMS, PALMS UP, AWAY FROM HIS SIDES.
TAKE YOUR SHOT... STOP THREATENING.
THEN FULLY EXPOSED, HE ADVANCES SLOWLY TOWARDS HIS ENEMY. NEVER BREAKING STRIDE.
NEVER SHOWING PAIN.

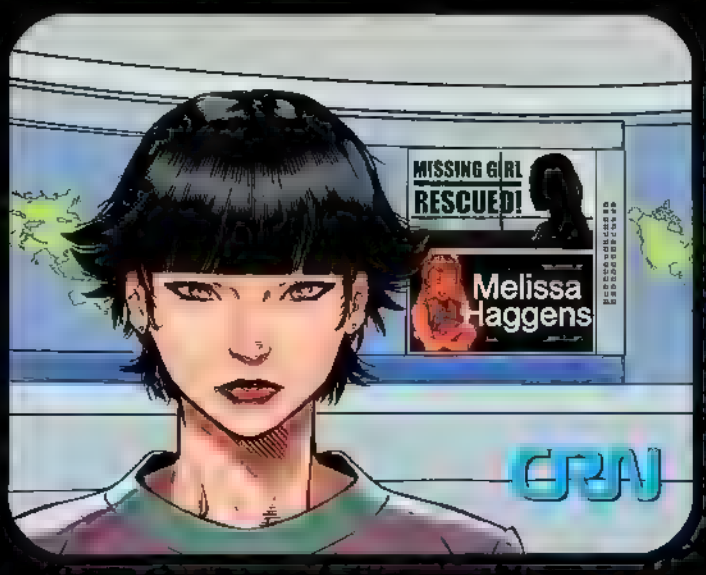
WHAT THE F*CK?! WHAT'VE YOU BECOME?
CLIK
THEN ONE MORE LAST FEEBLE EFFORT.
DON'T YOU DARE SMILE, YOU BASTARD!
CRAK
BROKEN--THE VAMPIRE STRUGGLES TO BREATHE AS HE FEELS HIS BODY BEGIN TO QUIVER AND SWEAT. SOMETHING IS GROWING INSIDE HIM!

I NEED YOU TO SAY ONE WORD TO ME... MONDAY.
urk
THAT'S IT, SAY IT. SAY MONDAY.
BECAUSE IF THERE'S ONE THING SPAWN KNOWS, IT'S THAT VAMPIRES RELY ON NOURISHMENT. DRAINING BLOOD FROM VICTIMS TO SUSTAIN THEIR COMPULSION TO ALWAYS BE FEEDING.
AND SO, ANY CREATURES-- OR INSECTS-- CAPABLE OF ABSORBING THAT NUTRITION, SCARES THE SHIT OUT OF THEM.
HE TRIES...

BUT NOTHING IS ABLE TO COME OUT.
THEN, FOR HIM, THERE IS SIMPLY 'NOTHING'.
please.
BLOOD STILL BOILING, SPAWN TURNS AS THE YOUNG GIRL WHISPERS HER PLEA, HER VOICE BREAKING HIS NEAR HYPNOTIC FOCUS HE'D BEEN CHANNELING AT HIS ENEMY

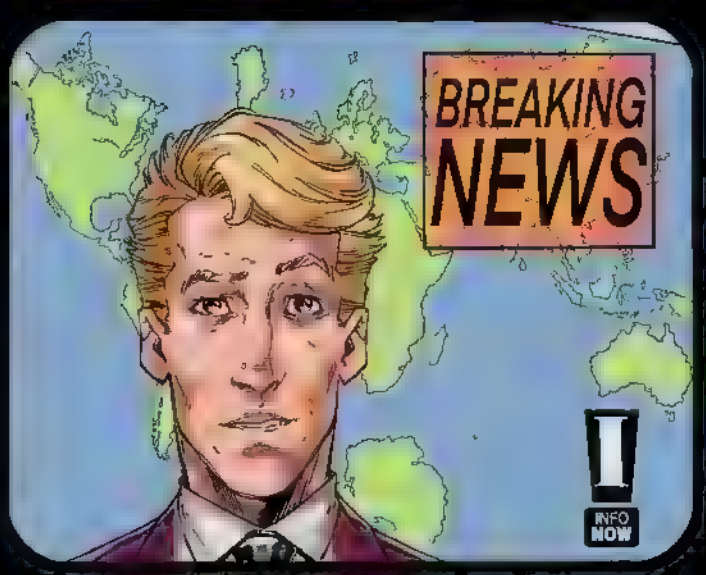
INSTEAD OF A BABY AND MOTHER WHO DESPERATELY NEED HIS HELP
THOUGH FOR THE LAST FEW MINUTES, MELISSA HAS TRAUMATICALLY WITNESSED AN UNGODLY FIGHT. NATURALLY, SHE COWERS AS HE NEARS
HE NEEDS TO BUILD SOME TRUST WITH HER, QUICKLY TRANSFORMING TO HIS REAL SIMMONS FORM IS THE BEST PLAY HE HAS LEFT
I PROMISE...
YOU'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE, TONIGHT. YOU AND YOUR BABY. BUT I NEED TO TOUCH YOU FIRST, CAN I DO THAT? CAN I PICK YOU UP?
please.

TEPIDLY, SHE NODS APPROVAL, THOUGH AL FEELS HER BODY TENSE, THEN GRADUALLY BEGIN TO TREMBLE WHEN HE LIFTS HER IN HIS ARMS.
YEARS OF ABUSE GRANTS HER THE RIGHT TO BE SCARED NOW.
SHE'LL NEED TO TRANSPORT WITH HIM INTO THE DARK. IT'S THE ONLY SAFE WAY TO GET HER OUT OF HERE. NOW THAT THE ENTIRE TOWN IS SHROUDED IN BLACK.
READY? HOLD YOUR BABY TIGHT, OKAY?
I UNDERSTAND THEIR STANCE. I'M SAYING IT'S UNACCEPTABLE. I'LL PHONE THEM IN THE MORNING TO CLEAR THIS UP.
DR. KEPLER... I NEED YOUR HELP.
WHO'RE YOU? GET OUT OF HERE! I'M CALLING SECURITY!
SHE... NEEDS YOUR HELP.
I'LL BEG IF I HAVE TO, BUT I'M TELLING YOU, SHE NEEDS SOMEONE. SOMEONE TO... TO... ACTUALLY, I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT SHE NEEDS RIGHT NOW...
WHO ARE YOU?
...BUT IT'S NOT ME. I'M BETTER AT OTHER THINGS.



ON A DIFFERENT NOTE, A COMMUNITY IS BREATHING A SIGH OF RELIEF TONIGHT. TWENTY-TWO YEAR OLD MELISSA HAGGENS HAS BEEN FOUND ALIVE. SHE HAD GONE MISSING FOUR YEARS AGO, AND WAS LAST SEEN WALKING HOME FROM HER HIGH SCHOOL IN ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS, NEAR THE IOWA-ILLINOIS BORDER. A SEARCH WENT STATEWIDE, WITH THE FBI SOON INVOLVED AS IT BECAME AN INTERSTATE SEARCH AS WELL. AFTER SIX MONTHS, THOUGH, THOSE AUTHORITIES WOUND DOWN THEIR INVESTIGATION, FEARING THE WORST. MELISSA'S PARENTS NEVER LOST HOPE, THOUGH, AS A BODY WAS NEVER RECOVERED.

THE YOUNG WOMAN IS CURRENTLY UNDER OBSERVATION. SHE IS REPORTED IN SATISFACTORY CONDITION, BUT FURTHER DETAILS ARE PENDING. UNDER CARE AS WELL IS THE BABY SON SHE BORE DURING HER FOUR-YEAR ORDEAL. ACCORDING TO MELISSA'S MOTHER, THE GIRL HAD NO IDEA WHERE SHE WAS BEING HELD. NEITHER MELISSA NOR HER BABY WERE ALLOWED TO GO OUTSIDE. PHYSICIANS TELL US THAT LACK OF NATURAL SUNLIGHT CAN CAUSE IMMUNE FUNCTION ISSUES. THE STAFF AND CREW HERE AT THE NETWORK JOIN ME IN WISHING ALL THE BEST FOR THESE TWO SURVIVORS.

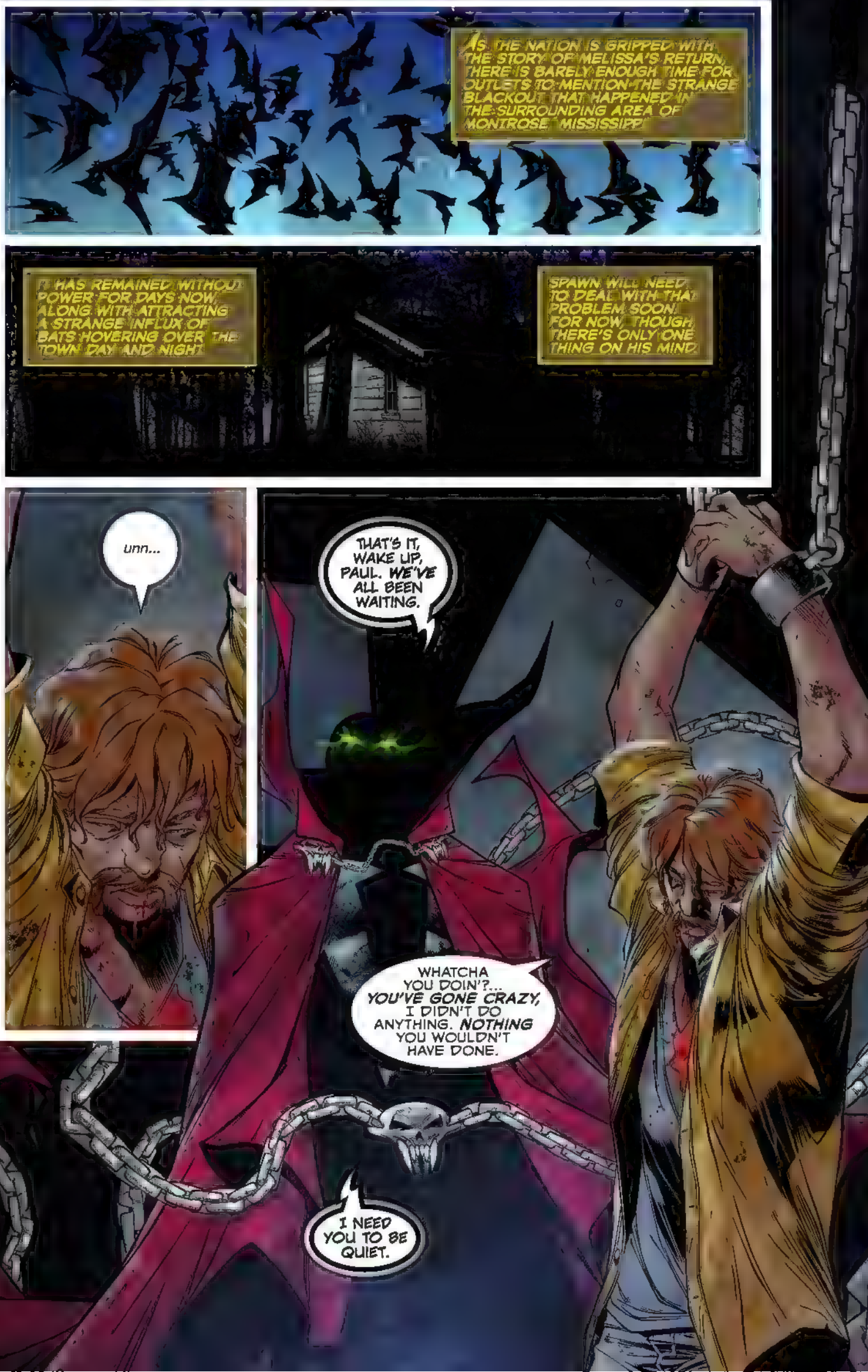


WE HAVE MORE ON MELISSA HAGGENS' ***MIRACULOUS*** ESCAPE. SOURCES CLOSE TO THE FAMILY HAVE LEAKED TO US THAT MELISSA'S BODY WAS COVERED WITH ***SCARS*** ALONG HER ARMS AND DOWN HER BACK FOLLOWING HER ***TERRIFYING*** FOUR-YEAR ORDEAL. SOME HAVE SAID THAT THEY RESEMBLE ***TOOTH MARKS***, THOUGH NO SPECIFIC DETAILS HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY SHARED. SADLY, IT HAS BEEN RUMORED THAT HER BABY SON, KYLE, ALSO HAD SOME OF THOSE ***SAME*** SCARS FOLLOWING WHAT WE CAN ONLY IMAGINE WAS AN ***UNSPEAKABLE*** IMPRISONMENT.

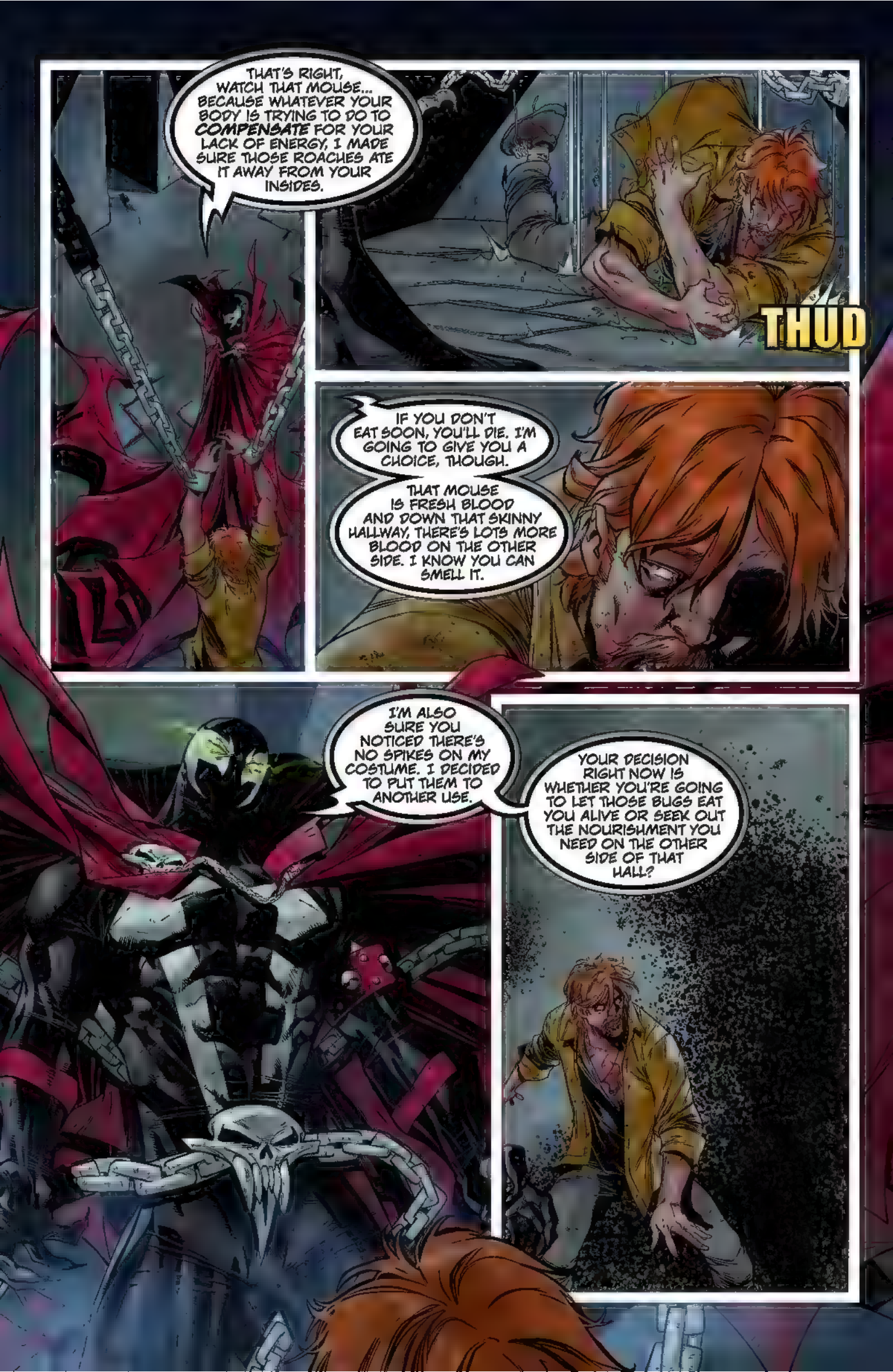
AS FOR HER ***KIDNAPPER***, AUTHORITIES HAVE SAID THAT THEY HAVE NO CONCRETE LEADS OTHER THAN THAT IT WAS A ***WHITE MALE***, AROUND THE AGE OF ***FORTY***. A COMPOSITE SKETCH IS BEING DRAWN UP, AND WILL BE CIRCULATED TO THE MEDIA ONCE MELISSA IS ***HEALTHY*** ENOUGH TO HELP THE F.B.I. FURTHER. FOR NOW, HER MOTHER AND FATHER, AS WELL AS HER ENTIRE FAMILY, ARE ***ECSTATIC*** TO HAVE THEIR DAUGHTER BACK AFTER LOSING HOPE THAT THEY'D EVER SEE HER ***ALIVE*** AGAIN.

LOOK..! USUALLY I'M ALL BOMBASTIC AND HOPPED UP TELLING YOU ABOUT GOVERNMENT ***OVERREACH*** AND POLITICAL AND CORPORATE ***MADNESS***, BUT THIS STORY ABOUT YOUNG MELISSA HAGGENS AND HER BABY HAS GIVEN ME PAUSE. IT'S HARD TO GET WORKED UP OVER ANOTHER TOPIC WHEN YOU SEE SOME OF THE IMAGES OF THAT GIRL ENTERING THE HOSPITAL ON A ***STRETCHER***. LET'S PRAY SHE MAKES A FULL RECOVERY AND THAT THE ***BASTARD*** THAT DID THIS TO HER IS HUNTED DOWN LIKE THE ***DOG*** HE IS, AND BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

NOW, IN RELATED NEWS THAT WE'VE JUST OBTAINED, MELISSA SAID THAT THE PERSON WHO WAS INFLUENTIAL IN HER ESCAPE WORE A LARGE ***RED CAPE*** AND WAS DRESSED IN ***BLACK***. TO ME, THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE ***SPAWN CHARACTER*** WE'VE BEEN SEEING BECOME MORE AND MORE PUBLIC WITH HIS ACTIONS. IF IT WAS INDEED HIM, WHERE ***IS*** HE IN ALL THIS, AND HOW DID HE FIND MELISSA AFTER ***ALL THESE YEARS?*** WE'RE ALL TRYING TO COME TO GRIPS OF WHETHER HE'S A HERO, OR HAD SOME ***OTHER*** CONNECTION TO THESE STRANGE EVENTS. ***STAY TUNED!***


AS THE NATION IS GRIPPED WITH THE STORY OF MELISSA'S RETURN, THERE IS BARELY ENOUGH TIME FOR OUTLETS TO MENTION THE STRANGE BLACKOUT THAT HAPPENED IN THE SURROUNDING AREA OF MONTROSE, MISSISSIPPI
IT HAS REMAINED WITHOUT POWER FOR DAYS NOW, ALONG WITH ATTRACTING A STRANGE INFLUX OF BATS HOVERING OVER THE TOWN DAY AND NIGHT
SPAWN WILL NEED TO DEAL WITH THAT PROBLEM SOON. FOR NOW, THOUGH, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING ON HIS MIND
unn...
THAT'S IT, WAKE UP, PAUL. WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING.
WHATCHA YOU DOIN'?... YOU'VE GONE CRAZY, I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING. NOTHING YOU WOULDN'T HAVE DONE.
I NEED YOU TO BE QUIET.

YOU GONNA KILL ME?
PERHAPS.
BUT LIKE I SAID, I NEED YOU TO BE QUIET. BEFORE YOU DO, I NEED YOU TO SAY "FRIDAY."
GO TO HELL!
SAY IT, PAUL.
I'M NOT GOING...
SAY IT!
FRIDAY.
EXACTLY, TODAY'S FRIDAY.
AND YOU HAVEN'T EATEN IN NEARLY FIVE DAYS.
FOR A VAMPIRE, THAT CAN BE PRETTY SEVERE. NO BLOOD. NO FOOD. IT HURTS, DOESN'T IT?
NOT EATING FOR SO LONG... LIKE YOU MADE THAT POOR GIRL SUFFER.
squeek
bap


THAT'S RIGHT, WATCH THAT MOUSE... BECAUSE WHATEVER YOUR BODY IS TRYING TO DO TO COMPENSATE FOR YOUR LACK OF ENERGY, I MADE SURE THOSE ROACHES ATE IT AWAY FROM YOUR INSIDES.
THUD
IF YOU DON'T EAT SOON, YOU'LL DIE. I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A CHOICE, THOUGH.
THAT MOUSE IS FRESH BLOOD AND DOWN THAT SKINNY HALLWAY, THERE'S LOTS MORE BLOOD ON THE OTHER SIDE. I KNOW YOU CAN SMELL IT.
I'M ALSO SURE YOU NOTICED THERE'S NO SPIKES ON MY COSTUME. I DECIDED TO PUT THEM TO ANOTHER USE.
YOUR DECISION RIGHT NOW IS WHETHER YOU'RE GOING TO LET THOSE BUGS EAT YOU ALIVE OR SEEK OUT THE NOURISHMENT YOU NEED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT HALL?

IF IT'LL MAKE YOUR CHOICE EASIER, WE CAN SPEED THIS UP.
THERE, NOW THE BUGS CAN SMELL YOU.
slit
LEAVING PAUL WITH NO CHOICE
BUT UPON ENTERING THE CRAMPED PASSAGE HE SEES SPAWN HAS BUILT AN ESCAPE MEANT TO BE CRUEL
CRUEL AND UNAVOIDABLE IF THERE IS ANY HOPE FOR PAUL TO SURVIVE

AS HE TURNS SIDEWAYS, HIS BODY, NO MATTER HOW SLOW OR DELIBERATE HE MOVES, IS CUT OVER AND OVER AGAIN. HIS STOMACH, LEGS, ARMS AND BACK ARE ALL RAVAGED BY THE PROTRUDING SPIKES FROM SPAWN'S SYMBIOTE COSTUME.
THIS HALL WASN'T BUILT TO BE A PASSAGEWAY... IT WAS BUILT TO BE A TORTURE CHAMBER, IN HOPES OF REMINDING PAUL ABOUT ALL THE DAYS HE INFLICTED PAIN UPON A TEENAGE GIRL WITHOUT A MOMENT'S PAUSE FOR CONCERN OR COMPASSION.
SPAWN WANTS TO DELIVER THE SAME COURTESY BACK, SO AS HE WATCHES PAUL STRUGGLE AND SCREAM...
...SPAWN LIKEWISE DOESN'T GIVE A SHIT HOW MUCH HIS VICTIM IS HURTING.

With the bugs becoming more frenzied with each droplet of blood spilled, it only forces Paul, a low ranked vampire, to hasten his pace
leading to more wounds to his body. This leads to more blood, then more frenzy from the insects
forcing Paul to pick up his pace turning this entire journey into a circular set of events with every step raising the stakes for all those involved
And lost upon this vampire who is beginning to gasp for breath is the number of actual spikes embedded in the two walls

THERE ARE ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND SEVEN SPAWN CHOSE THAT NUMBER SPECIFICALLY.
IT'S THE NUMBER OF DAYS MELISSA HAGGENS WAS HELD CAPTIVE. THE NUMBER OF DAYS SHE WAS BEING HURT EMOTIONALLY OR PHYSICALLY.
SPAWN HOPES ITS ENOUGH SHARP EDGES TO SEND HIS MESSAGE.
THROUGH BLINDING PAIN, PAUL PUSHES HIS RAVAGED BODY TOWARD THE LIGHT, ON THE OTHER SIDE FINALLY ESCAPING THE SADISTIC PUNISHMENT

OR SO HE THINKS.
YOU LOOK HORRIBLE, PAUL. GUESS I'VE BEEN A BIT ABUSIVE TO YOU, LIKE YOU WERE TO YOUR DOGS. I CAN COMMUNE WITH ANIMALS AND I CAN TELL YOU'VE BEATEN AND ABUSED THEM TOO.
THEY HAVEN'T EATEN IN FIVE DAYS EITHER--AND THEY'RE STARVING, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BOYS?
HERE. THIS KEY UNLOCKS A DOOR ON THE OTHER SIDE. TO LEAVE HERE YOU'LL NEED TO GO BACK THROUGH THE PASSAGE AGAIN.
BUT THE...THE BUGS.

I KNOW. BUT I PROMISED YOUR DOGS I'D FEED THEM ON FRIDAY. I'M NOT BREAKING THAT PROMISE.
CHAINS ARE RELEASED
AS PAUL DESPERATELY DIVES BACK INTO THE TIGHT HALLWAY
HE HAS SLOBBERING COMPANY JOINING HIM
AND SOMEONE IN THIS HOUSE TONIGHT IS GOING TO FEAST

1:9:7:4

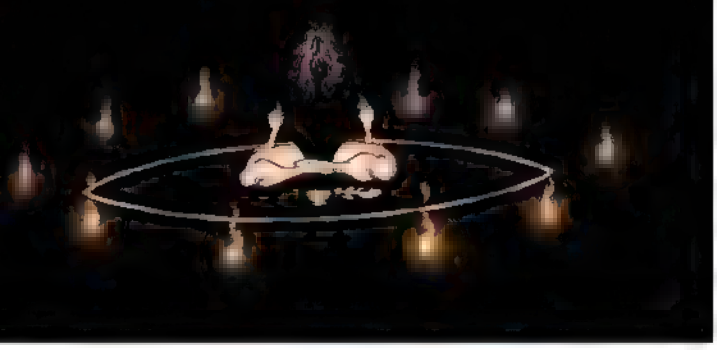
SPAWNING GROUND

PRESENTS:

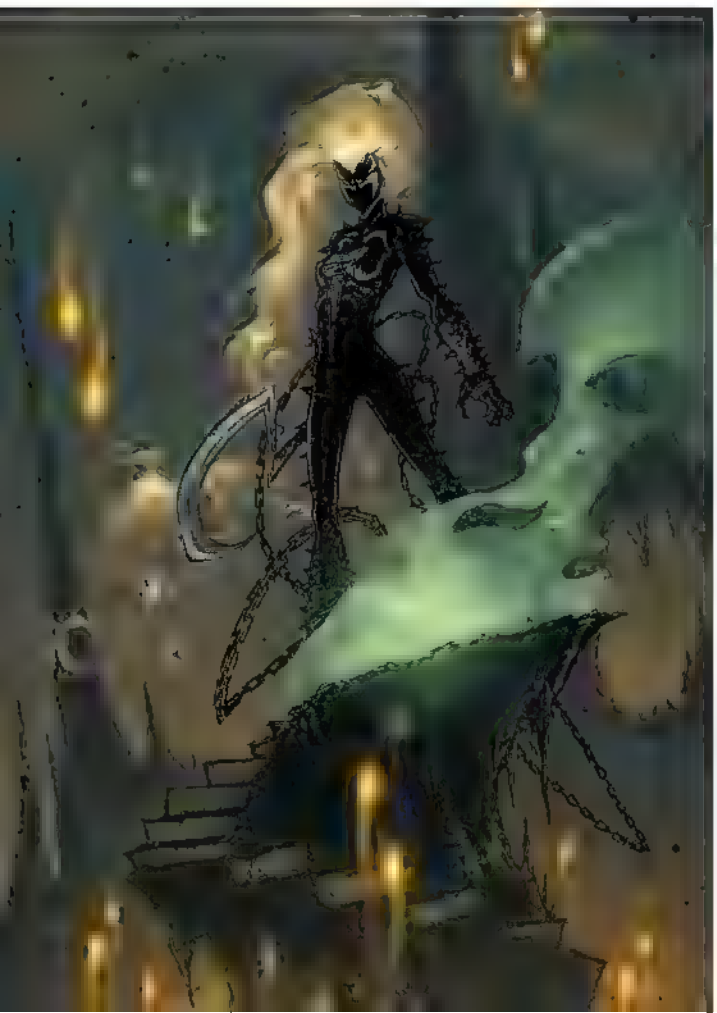
THE BREAKDOWN

THE EVOLUTION OF SHE-SPAWN

Nyx was the original She-Spawn. She was a young witch who helped Al Simmons and acquired a sliver of Spawn's powers. She made a bargain with the Demon Lord N'Zzezheaal so she would be able to enter Hell and save the soul of a childhood friend. Upon leaving Hell empty-handed, Mammon revealed himself as the mastermind behind the plot to steal all of Spawn's powers.



After the death of Nyx at the hands of Cogliostro, Nyx's friend, Jessica Priest, a reformed "Operative" working for Jason Wynn, discovers her body along with an ancient Grimoire and a medallion of resurrection. While attempting to use the medallion on Nyx, Jessica unknowingly awakens a dormant remnant of Spawn's powers still residing in Nyx. These powers bond to Jessica, creating the new She-Spawn.



Jessica has taken it upon herself to assist Al Simmons in his war to protect humanity. Putting aside their past differences, these two "Spawns" have started to build something to push back against the rising darkness. Working with both allies and former foes, She-Spawn helps to lead the charge against evil.

Do you have a question or comment about Spawn? If so, e-mail it to us at:
spawninggground@mcfarlane.com

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GUNSLINGER SPAWN

OCTOBER 2021

SPAWN® 323

OCTOBER 2021

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